



EACC NEWS

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The East Asia Christian Conference is an organ of continuing fellowship and co-operation among the Churches and Christian Councils in East Asia.

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EACC ASSEMBLY POSTPONEMENT PROPOSED

HONG KONG - The members of the EACC Continuation Committee, in response to the proposal of the Assembly Preparations Committee, appointed at Atami, Japan last year, voted in favour of postponing the next Assembly of the EACC until 1973.

The Officers of the EACC, meeting at Kowloon, Hong Kong, during the first week of June, viewed the votes sent in and took steps to forward the proposal to the 97 member bodies in sixteen countries.

The Continuation Committee, it was decided, would now meet in special session in August this year at Singapore to receive the report of the Policy and Structure Committee and to examine the proposed amendments to the EACC Constitution. It would also develop further the plans for the next Assembly.

A consideration in the proposal to postpone the Assembly was to give time to the members and other contributors for the proper financing of the Assembly.

It was the view of the responsible committees concerned that the Constitutional provision while stating that the Assembly would normally be held every four years does not prohibit or deter the postponing of the Assembly should the need arise.

Officers and members of the Policy and Structure Committee together decided that certain interim steps could be taken at the special sessions of the Continuation Committee to meet the changing needs of the EACC as an organization even before the whole Assembly met in 1973.

Steps envisaged would involve two major considerations: a "rationalization of the regional ecumenical programme which had greatly expanded during the last decade; and the establishment of "priorities" in relation to the conviction as well as resources of the constituency on the one hand and the inescapable challenges facing the Christian churches in the region on the other.

The series of meetings at Kowloon during the first week of June brought together the members of the Policy and Structure Committee, the Assembly Preparations Committee and the Officers of the EACC.

The Policy and Structure Committee which met in February in Hong Kong, was meeting for the second time and was chaired by Dr. W.Y. Kang, Korea. Absent were Mr. B. E. Fernando, Ceylon, and Miss Carmencita Karagdag, Philippines. The two General Secretaries were present as consultants.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN WEST IRIAN UNDERWAY

DJAJAPURA - The 360,000 member West Irian Church (Geredja Kristen Indiili di Irian Barat) of Indonesia has launched a rural and community development project which aims to give greater economic security and social betterment to West Irian.

The Rev. N. A. S. Apaseray, newly elected General Secretary and Dr. M. Hutasoit, Consultant for the West Irian Development Project for the Council of Churches in Indonesia are currently on a trip to study and observe community and rural development programmes in Southeast Asia. They were visiting the international Institute of Rural Reconstruction outside Manila.

The project planned in two stages by the Council of Churches of Indonesia and the World Council of Churches is expected to be completed in twenty years. It will provide opportunity for training in agricultural skills especially in the raising of pigs and poultry which will enhance the garden economy of the people.

While the Centre is still in the planning stages, selected students are being trained this year in Makassar. At the recent Assembly of the Council of Churches of Indonesia, the churches committed themselves to the development of the country. Each church within the constituency assessed its needs and assets and determined to share with others at the point of their particular need.

LAYMEN ABROAD ENTER NEW STAGE

HONG KONG - The Laymen Abroad Committee of the EACC meeting in Hong Kong on June 3, elected Bishop James Pong, Taiwan, as its new Chairman. It also set forth a devolved strategy to strengthen the growing initiatives to challenge Christian laymen away from their homeland to Christian obedience in their realm of work and service, in particular cities in Asia. After the close of the Committee session, it bade farewell to John Collins, EACC Laymen Abroad Secretary.

Bishop James Pong, who replaces Bishop Chiu Ban It, now Acting Chairman of the EACC, as Laymen Abroad Chairman, and John Collins had in 1965 initiated the EACC Laymen Abroad programme centred around relating Christian laymen from overseas to the local churches; evangelistic and pastoral care for all laymen from overseas; helping them to understand and appreciate the local culture and situation and changing patterns of association socially and religiously which tend to insulate laymen from overseas from the local residents.

The new programme recommendations would encourage already begun initiatives by selected key people in New Delhi, Bangkok, Singapore, Djakarta, Manila, Hong Kong and Tokyo in order to localize and deepen such experience of laymen and national churchmen living there. The need for a regional coordinator of the programme was indicated. The recommendations are slated to go to the special session of the EACC Continuation Committee to be held in Singapore in August this year.

The Rev. and Mrs. John Collins, at a dinner held in their honour by the Officers of the EACC and the Laymen Abroad Committee on the eve of their departure from work with the EACC, were given the appreciation of the EACC for the service rendered in Asia. Special mention was made of the sensitivity and ready response to feelings and advice of Asian churchmen. In his response, Mr. Collins thanked Asian churchmen for sharpening the demands of the Gospel of Christ in his own life. The Collins leave Hong Kong on June 30.

A new publication entitled "Life and World of Christians Abroad in Asia" was released in Hong Kong. It brings together the report of the Hong Kong Conference on the Ministry to Laymen Abroad held in November 1970, and additional statements on Laymen Abroad issues.

"RADICAL CHANGES" IN EDUCATION URGED

BANGALORE - The ten-day School of Economics organized by the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, from May 19-29, emphasized the role of political ideology in economic development.

The School was of the opinion that growth with justice can be ensured only through mass participation and political action.

The Director, Rev. M.A. Thomas, speaking about the objectives of this School said "that a pragmatic and non-academic approach is what is necessary today to ensure growth with justice to all. Hence the entire educational system in our country must undergo a radical change."

About twenty-five college professors, lecturers and senior students of economics from seven states in India participated in the residential School.

The delegates urged a non-text-book approach to the problem of economic growth. Since politics is the instrument to bring about changes in society, economics and politics must go hand in hand.

The current economic problems like nationalization, unemployment, democracy and development, property rights, land hunger, model of India's growth, foreign aid, rising spiral of prices, labour problems, privy purse and Indian economy, green revolution, etc. were studied with their social, political and cultural implications.

The chief political parties in India representing views from the right to the left presented their economic policies and spoke of their struggle for achieving social justice.

Dr. M. A. Oomen, Department of Economics, Kerala University; Prof. Dr. K.V. Gowda of Bangalore University and Fr. H. Volken, s.j., were among those who presented papers for discussion. Dr. Paul T. Lauby, General Secretary, United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, inaugurated the School.

The participants emphasized the need for similar schools to supplement the class room study of the subjects like politics and economics.

ASIAN EDUCATIONISTS PINPOINT PROBLEMS

SINGAPORE - Lack of educational opportunities for large sectors of the population in some of Asia's developing countries and the work-force "explosion" promise to be Asia's most critical problems in the 1970's.

These statements come from the Third Regional Conference of National Ministers of Education and those responsible for economic planning in Asia from 18 countries which met in Singapore from May 31 to June 7. The conference was convened by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the Second UN Development Decade begins.

"Pressure on education facilities in Asia where total school enrolment in 18 countries has jumped from 90 million in 1960 to about 160 million today would inevitably result in a great waste of human strength and energy with important economic consequences," a statement said.

In the 1960's, numbers in the age-group of working people in Asia (excluding Japan) increased by 229 million; in the 70's, this increase will be 304 million. Already rates of unemployment and underemployment are high in countries. Unemployment is a personal and family tragedy; not only this, but high rates of unemployment threaten to open the way to political chaos in some countries.

In speaking to these imperatives, the Conference called for a dynamic policy to develop education as an integral part of the overall strategy toward total economic and social development. Well-planned education which permits the full development of a nation's store of latent talent would also play an important role in the achievement of social justice. Imported educational systems are not only not needed but also too expensive, the statement said.

Concern was expressed that educational research should be compatible with and carefully geared to increasing employment opportunities. Warning was given that increased education, on the other hand, would not lead to the emergence of a skilled group for whom no work was available.

Emphasis was placed on the need for science education that is relevant to a child's environment and experts noted that education should stress the application of science and technology.

Although the conference agenda called for comprehensive planning for education in rural areas, there was little done in this sector, according to some parti-

cipants. Despite the growing industrialization of Asia, the bulk of the population still lives in the country side and the introduction of new agricultural techniques needs an increasingly better educated rural population.

EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT?

COONOR, INDIA - A two-day work party for preliminary planning for a series of projects in "education for Development" and the Church's role in this was held June 3 and 4 at the India Sunday School Union Conference Centre in Coonoor, Nilgiris, India.

The Work-Party included the Rev. Elia Peter, Secretary for Education of the Methodist Church of South Asia; Dr. S. Amritham, Principal of Madurai Theological College and Acting Secretary of the Board of Theological Education of India; Dr. T. Wilkinson, Professor of Sociology, Nagpur; the Rev. N. Daniel, Administrative Secretary of the India Sunday School Union, and the Rev. John England, Secretary for Christian Education and Lay Training (CELT) of the EACC.

These educationists in church related programmes studied Indian education as a whole to isolate crucial issues for the development of people and to prepare a strategy for educational renewal within and beyond the Church.

Proposals growing out of the Work-Party which are being circulated to a wider constituency include: a pilot working consultation to assemble those who are questioning goals and procedures of the existing educational system and wrestling with alternatives to it and the Church's present involvement; the fostering of discussion and action on the issues by a wide range of groups, including research teams on particular aspects; and state or regional consultants for key educators for analysis of the planning of educational innovation.

The Work-Party at Coonoor will continue to assemble the relevant documents and identify personnel and agencies similarly concerned.

John England, CELT Secretary located at Perth, Australia, was proceeding from Coonoor to Karachi to meet with leading church educationists there. He would then go on to Geneva and to Rome where he would meet with SODEPAX (Society, Development, Peace--a joint World Council of Churches and Roman Catholic agency for development) representatives regarding education for development. He will also represent the EACC at the World Conference on Christian Education to be held July 14 - 21 at Lima, Peru.

IN A WORD . . .

- Canon Burgess Carr, 35, has been elected General Secretary of the All African Conference of Churches headquarters located at Nairobi, Kenya, and began his new duties on June 1. Canon Carr, an Episcopalian from Liberia, was formerly Africa Secretary of CICARWS of the World Council of Churches and on the staff of the Churches on International Affairs.

- The Australian Council of Churches gave \$30,000 on June 9 from emergency funds as an initial contribution towards the care and rehabilitation of East Pakistan refugees in India, according to a report reaching the EACC Office. The money will be dispersed by and through India's Christian Agency for Social Action to provide food, tarpaulins, medical supplies and milk. 153 refugee camps located along the 2500 miles of East Pakistan-Indian border are being assisted by CASA.

- June 14 marked the beginning of a seventeen-week theological training extension course for lay men and women in Bangkok sponsored by the Church of Christ in Thailand's Theological Seminary, Chiengmai. Course credit will be given in the five courses to students who have the equivalent of high school standing. The extension courses, the first in Thailand, will eventually be conducted in Thai, Chinese and English.



ASIAN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Newsletter

June 15, 1971

sign of christian presence

Vietnam
Laos
Cambodia

Director: Samuel M. Isaac
Information: Ruth K. Cadwallader

VIDYA SAGAR HONOURED: ACS AFFIRMED

"The Royal Government of Laos takes pleasure in awarding this certificate of merit to Mr. Vidya Sagar for meritorious service rendered in the development of agriculture in the Kingdom of Laos."

On June 8, in Savannakhet, Laos, Vidya Sagar, Asian Christian Service volunteer, received the above Certificate of Merit from the Director of Veterinary Services, Dr. Houane Sihapanya, on behalf of the Royal Laos Government. In this way appreciation was shown for the work of Mr. Sagar who has just completed a term with ACS and who has been the guiding spirit in the establishment of the Farmer's Training Center.

Vidya Sagar finished a two-year term with Asian Christian Service and left Laos on June 13 to go to the University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture at Los Banos, Laguna, Philippines, to study further in horticulture. There he will be joined by his wife and two children who have resided in Allahabad during the two-year period.

"If it weren't for the separation of our family again, I would stay with the work in Laos. I have really enjoyed it and there is so much to be done. As I walked through the resettlement villages, I could see so many things that could be done with very little cost, if someone would only initiate it and encourage the people. I leave a great part of my life in Laos."

Writing of his leaving, Vidya Sagar expressed these thoughts about the future of the work at the Farmer's Training Centre. "A little over a year and a half ago ACS launched this programme of training and agricultural extension. It was very unique in its nature and structure in Laos. It was the first time that a voluntary agency had established a programme with the full cooperation of the local Government.

"On our teaching staff we have fully trained Lao officials whose service has been made available to the Training Centre. The Government, both state and central, have been so impressed with the programme that two of the staff members have been selected by the Government to go to Japan for advance training. In the meantime, in their absence suitable replacements have been offered to the Centre. Mr. Louat Phothisane with a B. Sc. from the University of Hawaii will be the local administrator. We will have a good staff. I have the assurance that the work is in good hands.

"The training programme has gone on according to the schedule and we have been able to add new dimensions to the work under the joint auspices of ACS and the Laos Government."

One new dimension has been the addition of a training course for refugee girls. Fifteen girls just completed the first six-weeks course in Home Economics at the Centre and the Government awarded certificates to them. Three fully trained home economic agents have taught the course. Plans have been completed for the establishment of a Weaving Training Centre for the refugee women at Seno, the resettlement camp a few kilometers away. It is an extension of the Farmers Training Centre. A weaving teacher, Khun Mali, has just been secured as well as fifteen new looms. Here the beautiful traditional hand-woven and embroidered Laos borders and bags will be made. New techniques of dyeing and processing will be introduced to improve the quality. A method of marketing will be found in order to make this a lucrative business which will give work and in-

come to the refugee women.

And so the work goes on as the volunteer leaves. ACS plans to place another agriculturist here to work with and give encouragement to the people.

Since the March incursion into Laos, thousands more have come to Savannakhet province. Security has been shaken as the struggle continues and the bombs rain down. Such relationship is reassuring and heartening to the people of Laos and they have expressed it through the Certificate of Merit to Vidya Sagar.

IT WAS 'PEN JANG' (IT MATTERS) NOT 'BAW PEN JANG'

Two years ago when Vidya Sagar came to Asian Christian Service from rural YMCA work in India and with a degree in Agriculture from the University of Allahabad, he was assigned to Savannakhet. Intense bombing had uprooted whole communities in Moun Phine area and they were sent to find safety around Savannakhet. After the initial need for relief and routine living took over, more constructive plans were needed to help people find themselves in a new way of life in a new part of their country.

ACS was cognizant of the needs of these farming people. When he assessed the situation in Savannakhet, Vidya Sagar, who combines tremendous zeal and enthusiasm with skilled training in agriculture as well as real love for the people, saw the need for a basic training programme in some of the fundamentals of agriculture--"to motivate farmers so that they can break away from the subsistence syndrome due to lack of knowledge."

The Farmer's Training Centre became possible because the Government officials in Savannakhet province saw this need also and from the beginning gave ACS their utmost cooperation and assistance. An abandoned farm centre of approximately six hectares was made available and then was developed by ACS. The equipment at the Centre is simple and uncomplicated and the type that is easily accessible to the trainee on his own farm. Local materials are used whenever possible. The Centre uses practical methods which are understandable and can be appropriated by the Laos farmer.

The objectives of the project were arrived at jointly by the Royal Laos Government and ACS and were simple: to teach modern and improved methods and practices in the easy-to-employ production methods in poultry and swine raising, vegetable and field crop production and simple farm economics; to teach the trainees to apply the principles involved in developing their own farms for increased and profitable production and to develop in the trainees a love for the land and an appreciation for its benefits.

The trainees are selected from candidates who had either owned a farm or had been active in the operation of a family farm. They must be motivated to develop their own farm after completing training and must be recommended by the regional government officers of agriculture, veterinary or forestry services.

Three-month training courses were instituted. The graduation ceremony has been a special event in the community. Government officials come and present the graduates with both a certificate and some relevant piece of farm equipment. Four classes of young men have come to the Centre, been trained and gone out. They still maintain contact with the Centre and their experiences of implementing their training is used to enhance the programme of teaching and training.

On June 1, 1971, the fifth group of trainees entered for training. The future is bright for the Farmer's Training Centre at Savannakhet and it is a light in the dark future for the Kingdom of Laos.

"Baw pen jang" is the common expression in Laos which means, "It doesn't matter". But Vidya Sagar and ACS believe that it does matter and it matters a great deal that people are given the knowledge, the love and means to have dignity and opportunity to live. It is then, "Pen jang"!